

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 19488 020041Z
ACTION DHA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5766

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FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION BANGKOK AUG 31 REPEATED FOR
ACTION

QUOTE:
SONGKHLA 0176

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: SREF TH
SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES INITIALLY REFUSED ENTRY
REF: A) AUGUST 29 SONGKHLA MEMO TO REFUGEE OFFICE; B) SONGKHLA 164

1. TALKS I HELD WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEE CAMP LEADERS ON AUGUST 31
CONFIRMED REPORT REF A THAT THAI POLICE INITIALLY REFUSED ENTRY
TO 12 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON AUGUST 25. HOWEVER CAMP OFFICIALS
WITH ASSISTANCE OF UNHCR REP GRAHAM LEAN, WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN
SONGKHLA, PERSUADED THAI OFFICIALS TO ALLOW BOAT TO LAND AND TO TREAT
THOSE ABOARD AS REFUGEES. LEAN INTERVIEWED NEW REFUGEES ON AUGUST 25

-
26 BEFORE RETURNING TO BANGKOK.

2. CAMP OFFICIALS SAID POLICE HAD TOLD THEM ONE WEEK EARLIER THAT NO
ADDITIONAL REFUGEES WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LAND IN THAILAND. THE POLICE
REITERATED THIS STATEMENT AFTER THE LATEST BOAT ARRIVAL. POLICE
OFFICER CONFIRMED THIS TO POL ASSISTANT. HE ALSO SAID AUGUST 25
REFUGEES WERE ALLOWED TO LAND BECAUSE THEIR BOAT WAS IN POOR
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CONDITION AND FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS.

3. CAMP OFFICIALS ALSO SAID POLICE HAD RESTRICTED COMING AND GOING
OF REFUGEES AND ACCESS OF VISITORS TO CAMP RECENTLY. ONE REASON WAS
THE FLIGHT OF 14 REFUGEES REPORTED REF B. BUT RESTRICTIONS TIGHTENED
EVEN MORE ONE WEEK AGO AT THE SAME TIME POLICE INFORMED CAMP
OFFICIALS THAT NO NEW REFUGEES WILL BE ALLOWED TO LAND IN THAILAND.

4. VICE GOVERNOR OF SONGKHLA CONFIRMED RECEIPT OF NEW INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WHEN I CALLED ON HIM ON AUGUST 31 TO ADVISE HIM OF BARNES-CUSHING-FELDMAN VISIT SEPT 3. HE SAID THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INSTRUCTED THE PROVINCES ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO TO TREAT ALL REFUGEES, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY, AS ILLEGAL ENTRANTS. IN THE CASE OF BOAT CASES, THAI MARINE POLICE AND THAI NAVY WERE TO REFUSE ENTRY INTO THAI PORTS OF SEAWORTHY BOATS. THEY WERE TO ALLOW UNSEAWORTHY BOATS TO LAND. THOSE ABOARD WILL BE JAILED, BROUGHT BEFORE COURTS AND EXPELLED FROM THAILAND, POSSIBLY BACK TO THEIR NATIVE COUNTRY, IF ANOTHER COUNTRY WILL NOT ACCEPT THEM. THESE REFUGEES WILL NOT RPT NOT BE ALLOWED TO LIVE IN A REFUGEE CAMP.

5. VICE GOVERNOR ALSO SAID THAT HE AND SEVERAL OFFICIALS FROM OTHER PROVINCES HAD RECOMMENDED TO THE RTG THAT ALL REFUGEES ALREADY IN COUNTRY BE PLACED INTO THREE CAMPS, SEGREGATING THEM BY NATIONALITY--ONE FOR VIETNAMESE, ONE FOR LAOTIANS, AND THE THIRD FOR CAMBODIANS. HE BELIEVED THIS PROPOSAL WILL PROBABLY BE APPROVED BUT THAT IMPLEMENTING IT MAY TAKE SIX MONTHS OR MORE. HE CLAIMED THAT CONGREGATING THE REFUGEES INTO THREE CAMPS WITH ADEQUATE SPACE WILL ALLOW BETTER CONTROL OF THE REFUGEES AND WILL PROVIDE THE REFUGEES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO USEFUL WORK, WHICH WILL AID THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH. SIGNED HAYASHIDA. UNQUOTE O'DONOHUE

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